

MINUTE OF AGREEMENT ON THE STRATEGIC PLAN BETWEEN SCOTTISH WATER AND THE CUSTOMER FORUM

Introduction

1. The Water Industry Commission for Scotland (the Commission) Methodology for the Strategic Review of Charges 2021-2027 '*Innovation and Collaboration: future proofing the water industry for customers*' built on the success of the Customer Forum in agreeing Scottish Water's Business Plan at the last Strategic Review of Charges 2015-2021 (SRC15). In that review the Customer Forum worked effectively with Scottish Water to ensure that the interests of customers were at the heart of the SRC15 Business Plan.
2. In March 2017, through a tri-partite agreement, Scottish Water, Citizens Advice Scotland and the Commission established the second Customer Forum to act as a conduit for the views of customers and communities in the Strategic Review of Charges 2021-2027 (SRC21) process.
3. The role of the Customer Forum is to seek to agree with Scottish Water:
 - a) a Strategic Plan which has taken proper account of the evidence on the priorities and preferences of current and future customers; and
 - b) an associated price profile for 2021-27 which is fully consistent with the Ministerial Objectives and their Principles of Charging Statement, and the ranges set by the Commission.
4. The Commission has set out in its methodology it is minded to accept such an agreed Strategic Plan and an associated price profile for 2021-27 as part of its Draft Determination.
5. This Minute of Agreement is the agreement between Scottish Water and the Customer Forum with regards to the Strategic Plan. It reflects customer and community priorities and aspirations, and the aspects where further assurance or points of detail were required from Scottish Water outwith the Strategic Plan document.
6. This Minute of Agreement should be read in the context of the Strategic Plan '*A Sustainable Future Together*', the Customer Forum's formal response to the plan (Annex A) and the *Customer Insight* supporting document.
7. The Commission will publish their Prospects for Prices Decision Paper in February 2020. Following that, Scottish Water and the Customer Forum will consider and seek to agree a price profile for 2021-27, and suitable safeguards for customers. Agreeing the Strategic Plan does not imply that the Customer Forum is endorsing any specific price profile at this time.
8. The Customer Forum has played a key role in ensuring robust customer and community input into the co-creation of the Strategic Plan. It has worked collaboratively with water sector stakeholders to commission high quality behavioural, quantitative and qualitative

research, seeking customers' views and expectations of service levels and the level of charges.

9. The Customer Forum developed evidence-based positions across key strategic and operational areas relevant to the SRC21 process and these informed their customer and community input into the Strategic Plan.

Outcomes for customers

1. The Customer Forum considers the Strategic Plan has taken proper account of the evidence provided on the views and aspirations of current and future customers. The implementation of the Strategic Plan will transform Scottish Water.

2. Over the last two years through research, insight and engagement programmes, Scottish Water, the Customer Forum and other industry stakeholders have sought the views and expectations of more than 25,000 people from across the diverse customer base to inform the Strategic Plan.

3. Scottish Water has actively sought to accommodate the Customer Forum's positions to achieve better outcomes for customers and communities. The discussions between them have focused on areas of key interest for customers, including, but not limited to:

- a) Adopting a longer-term view to meet the needs of both current and future customers, seeking to ensure the maintenance of service excellence and reliability in the face of challenges of climate change and replacing ageing assets.
- b) Tackling climate change by going beyond net zero emissions as one of the three strategic outcomes.
- c) Aiming to deliver and demonstrate great value in investing customers' money efficiently, with customers seeing the benefit of Scottish Water developing increasing revenue streams from energy and circular economy activity.
- d) Optimising the role Scottish Water can play in securing the health of, and access to, the wider environment; by:
 - Enabling access to their assets, particularly reservoirs and upland catchments for leisure purposes;
 - Development of catchment management and partnerships to manage the quality of source waters;
 - Further understanding and mitigating the risks of emerging pollutants; working in partnership with others to undertake research, identify and implement source control and promote regulatory change where necessary and possible.
- e) Delivering additional public benefit, including through a step-change in building active relationships with customers and their communities, including:
 - Continuation of the *Learn to Swim* programme;

- Engaging customers to support a sustainable service and to use water wisely;
 - Pursuing charging structures for business customers that incentivise good practice (e.g. incentivising the right behaviour through appropriate charging structures for surface water management solutions).
- f) Working with partners and others to provide access to a lead-free water supply, with all lead removed from the public network by 2045.

4. The Customer Forum welcomes the prioritisation of maintaining a reliable service and addressing climate change and its impact on water and waste water services, which reflect customers' aspirations.

Further assurance and clarifications

There were a small number of proposals identified by the Customer Forum as representing the views of customers which were more detailed or short term in nature than appropriate for the Strategic Plan. Here the Customer Forum has sought clarification and commitment from Scottish Water.

The clarification and assurance sought, together with Scottish Water's response and commitments, are detailed below. These are structured to align with the three Strategic Outcomes outlined in the Strategic Plan.

Strategic Outcome: Service excellence – adapting to a changing climate, dealing with our ageing assets and meeting customers' evolving expectations

1. Supporting customers in vulnerable circumstances

There were several research projects within the SRC21 process which sought to understand the needs of vulnerable customers and identify the best solutions for important services which affect them.

The Strategic Plan states that Scottish Water will adopt new technology and enhance support to customers in vulnerable circumstances. Scottish Water will also work with other stakeholders to ensure that household customers in the most vulnerable financial circumstances receive appropriate support in paying charges.

The Customer Forum sought clarity from Scottish Water on a number of points on how it would enhance support to vulnerable customers, work in partnership with other organisations representing these customers and run a campaign to increase the number of people on the Priority Services Register.

In response, Scottish Water clarified that it will:

- Develop and provide tailored support to customers in vulnerable circumstances. Recent customer research indicates proactive communications are a key area of focus for this customer group and a pilot is underway to improve these.
- Provide further training to Scottish Water staff to better support customers in vulnerable circumstances. A training pilot is planned to help them identify and effectively deal with customers who may be in a vulnerable situation.
- Remain committed to the ongoing operation and maintenance of a Priority Services Register and campaign to encourage customers in vulnerable circumstances to sign up to the register. Scottish Water will run a series of events in 2020 across Scotland, with other public service organisations, to raise awareness about their new Priority Services Register and to promote information about the risk of bogus callers.
- Continue to work with Age Scotland and seek out other appropriate partnerships with those representing customers in vulnerable circumstances to provide further support and promote its register and services.

2. Licensed Providers and business customers

The Strategic Plan states that Scottish Water will create the best possible retail environment, be a great wholesaler and ensure it is easy for Licensed Providers and business customers to do business with Scottish Water. Additionally, Scottish Water will pursue charging structures that incentivise good practice.

Research and direct engagement with business customers and Licensed Providers identified a number of areas which will help Scottish Water become a great wholesaler.

The Customer Forum sought assurance from Scottish Water that a number of specific areas raised through Customer Forum engagement with business customers and Licensed Providers would be addressed, including:

- Alignment with best in class organisations to meet business customers' expectations and to have the ability to respond to requests in a timely manner.
- Service improvements including:
 - Improvements in the new connections process for both developers and business customers.
 - Scheduling Scottish Water activity to accommodate the needs of business customers, with appointments rearranged only by mutual consent.
 - Increased transparency so the business customer, Licensed Provider and Scottish Water all have sight of job progress, including when problems arise and the job is returned to the beginning of the specific process.
 - Introduction of a new approach to reading meters in circumstances where it is impractical for Licensed Providers to comply with Scottish Water's requirements and results in unavoidable performance charges to the Licensed Provider.

- In light of the commitments in the Strategic Plan to transform surface water management and/or to pursuing charging structures that incentivise good practice:
 - Promoting a market review of the Section 29e framework to identify any improvements which would support achieving better outcomes for customers.
 - Where business customers remove/re-use surface water this would be reflected in the proportional element of the charges.
 - Where business customers make efforts to increase water efficiency this would be incentivised through the charging structure.

In response, Scottish Water commits to improvements in its wholesale service including:

- Identifying characteristics of “best in class” wholesale service and improvements from elsewhere that can be implemented in Scotland.
- Implementing the results of the current end-to-end wholesale process review to deliver improvements.
- Delivering further service improvements through implementation of a new customer relationship management system and portal for new connections and to adopt a new customer experience measure for the development community to drive continuous improvement.
- The development and delivery of schedules of work that as far as possible are structured and planned to accommodate and meet the needs of the business customers as well as meet relevant market KPIs.
- Working with the Central Market Agency (CMA) and other stakeholders in considering the creation of a customer portal which would enable customers to track the progress of their requests for service. This would also allow Scottish Water and other market participants to measure the end-to-end customer journey time.
- Consulting with market participants to ensure that its meter assets are of the right type and in the right place so that Licensed Providers can more easily fulfil their market obligations and to identify if there are other potential innovative approaches to meter reading that would benefit the market and customers, and if so adopt these.
- Promoting that a market review of the Section 29e framework is undertaken to identify any improvements that can be made.
- Continuing discussion with the Scottish Government to consider how to take forward modifications to drainage charges that incentivise the removal of surface water currently entering the sewerage system so proposals can be included in the final Principles of Charging statement in June 2020.
- Promoting discussion with industry participants about what adjustments to the charging structure may support achieving net zero emissions and a flourishing Scotland.
- Working with the independent customer perspective, testing with Licensed Providers whether with the implementation of these measures they regard Scottish Water to be a great wholesaler and responding to make any necessary further improvements.

3. Water availability – reducing water use and leakage

Reducing leakage was identified as important to both household and business customers through a number of different research studies. The *Future Strategy* research also identified that Scottish Water should encourage customers to use water wisely.

The Strategic Plan sets out that Scottish Water will reduce the amount of water it takes from the natural environment by reducing leakage and inspiring customers to use water wisely.

The Customer Forum sought assurance on how Scottish Water would align a reduction in the amount of water it takes from the natural environment with its commitment to net zero emissions, how it would provide updates on progress and how it would implement a measure of reduction in water use.

Scottish Water commits to:

- Strengthening its assessment of the economic level of leakage by incorporating an appropriate cost of carbon to set a revised economic and carbon level of leakage, and to continually seek out ways to reduce the cost and carbon impact of addressing leakage so the target level reduces over time.
- Report both the target level of leakage and its performance towards achieving it.
- Report levels of abstraction as well as per capita consumption, and to seek to reduce these over time.

4. Interruptions to supply

Several research projects indicated that household customers tend to be tolerant of short-term interruptions to supply, recognising that things can go wrong within the network. In contrast, business customers are less able to cope with short term interruptions to supply. However, both household and business customers are less likely to cope with long-term interruptions, where homes, businesses and communities are without water for extended periods. Where there is an interruption to supply customers expect that Scottish Water will communicate effectively.

The Strategic Plan states that Scottish Water will transform the interconnectivity of major water supply systems over the coming decades, prioritising the highest risk systems first, so that customers will ultimately have a more resilient water supply. Scottish Water will ensure that competing investment priorities are appraised and considered appropriately against a 'six capitals' framework¹.

The Customer Forum sought assurance that Scottish Water would continue to stay abreast of customers' evolving expectations in this area with regards to the frequency and duration of unplanned interruptions to supply to shape investment decision making.

¹ The 'six capitals' are social, natural, human, intellectual, manufactured and financial.

In addition the Customer Forum sought assurance that Scottish Water would seek to continue to meet customers' communications expectations during interruptions to supply, and seek feedback from those customers who have experienced an interruption to supply to inform future service.

Scottish Water commits to:

- Continuing to undertake regular research to understand and anticipate how customers' expectations continue to evolve in this area, to incorporate this insight into investment decision making and to continue to meet customers' communications expectations.
- Continuing to seek feedback from customers who have reported a service issue to drive continuous improvements.

5. Preventing sewer blockages and sewer flooding

The *Future Strategy* research concluded that sewer flooding was seen as an issue which could have a physical and psychological impact on customers. The management of sewer flooding was seen as an essential part of Scottish Water's role, and customers need to be provided with clear information about their role in minimising blockages of the sewer network.

The Strategic Plan states Scottish Water plans to lead the transformation of surface water management, promoting blue-green approaches; investing to reduce the risk to customers impacted by repeat high consequence sewer flooding where it is not disproportionately expensive; and boosting its work to influence and inspire manufacturers and customers to change their approach to disposal of inappropriate items to sewers.

The Customer Forum sought assurance that the definition of 'disproportionately expensive' would be kept under review. Further there would be a proactive approach to blockage prevention, building on the 'Fats, Oils and Greases (FOG)' and '*Keeping the cycle running*' pilots in SRC15, with a defined and increasing programme size and tailored approaches for household and business customers.

Scottish Water commits to:

- Keeping the definition of 'disproportionately expensive' for sewer flooding investment under regular review and to ensure an independent customer perspective is included as part of any review.
- Building on recent pilot approaches and continually utilising customer and behavioural insights to develop its proactive approach to preventing blockages.
- Setting out in its Delivery Plan the approach and scale of activity on blockage prevention.

6. Community Engagement

Throughout the research programme, customers and communities indicated that they would value strengthening relationships with Scottish Water.

The Strategic Plan states Scottish Water will transform relationships with customers and communities, making them active and two-way.

The Customer Forum sought assurance as to the first steps that would be taken on transforming relationships with customers and communities and Scottish Water reporting on community engagement implementation.

Scottish Water commits to:

- Extending the Community Engagement pilot programme to enhance the way it involves customers and communities in investment decisions.
- Refreshing its Consultation Code, *'Keeping you in the Picture'* for the 2021-27 period to ensure a consistent, published engagement process for all planned works.
- Evaluating and reporting the performance of its community engagement, and inviting periodic independent assessment.

7. Private water and waste water management

The Strategic Plan states Scottish Water will support the Scottish Government in its approach to private water supplies, making this a key focus area for innovation and committing to developing support services on a not-for-profit basis.

This commitment was welcomed by the Customer Forum and they asked for clarification on the support Scottish Water will provide to customers with private waste water solutions.

Scottish Water clarified that it will:

- Continue to offer a septic tank desludging service on a not-for-profit basis.
- Continue to work with SEPA and others to develop guidance to householders, communities, developers and planners to support the installation of suitable systems for private use.

Strategic Outcome: Beyond net zero emissions – showing leadership in mitigating climate change and enhancing Scotland's natural environment

8. Natural Capital

In the *Wider Environment* research, several environment-related initiatives were presented to customers for consideration. Many attracted interest and were perceived as worthwhile and seen to connect well with Scottish Water's role and the natural environment.

The Strategic Plan states that Scottish Water's reservoirs and other landholdings are a significant resource and Scottish Water will manage them in a way that increases the contribution they can make to our natural and social capital.

The Customer Forum sought assurance as to the early steps that would be taken to deliver this commitment, including an audit of Scottish Water assets and estates which has the potential for customer, community and biodiversity benefits, and should help identify outdoor access opportunities and potential carbon offsetting initiatives. The Customer Forum also suggested Scottish Water should work with the broader stakeholder community to ensure a joined-up approach to environment and species management.

Scottish Water commits to:

- Undertake during 2021 an audit of its assets and estate to identify which have the most potential for biodiversity gains for Scotland and for catchment restoration.
- Implement the findings of the audit, seeking to work in partnership with local communities, other land owners and third sector groups where appropriate, to realise the potential gains and support the development of national ecological networks.
- Pilot opening up its estate where appropriate to the community for outdoor access opportunities.

Implementation of the Strategic Plan

Both parties recognise there is much yet to work through to move towards achieving the outcomes the Strategic Plan sets out. Significant building blocks will include on-going engagement with customers, the 2021-27 Delivery Plan, the route map to net zero emissions, Strategic Environmental Assessments and the reporting performance and information framework.

In particular with relation to the reporting performance and information framework the Customer Forum has sought assurance from Scottish Water that this would:

- Record progress toward the Strategic Plan outcomes.
- Provide visibility of performance against objectives and targets that are set in Scottish Water's Delivery Plan.
- Be understandable and accessible to customers.
- Include an open and transparent narrative around outcomes, progress, innovation and areas of learning.
- Drive the transformation and behaviours required within Scottish Water to meet the Strategic Plan outcomes.

Scottish Water commits to continuing to work with the Customer Forum and other stakeholders to develop reporting that meets the above requirements.

Empowering Customers and Communities

The Customer Forum welcomes Scottish Water's commitments in the Strategic Plan to ensure an independent, active customer perspective on the services they provide. Both parties agree that it is important that there is a strong voice ensuring the needs and aspirations of customers and communities are articulated and addressed as Scottish Water undertakes the transformation set out in its Strategic Plan.

The remit of the future perspective is likely to include:

- strategic challenge and insight from and on behalf of customers;
- ensuring the views of customers and communities are considered in investment decisions;
- supporting Scottish Water's work to increase public benefit and develop active, engaged relationships with customers and communities; and
- supporting Scottish Water in assuring customers that they are getting what they regard as value².

The Customer Forum also welcomes Scottish Water's commitment to establish a 'world leading' national engagement programme, building on the success of the customer and community engagement which has informed the Strategic Plan.

The national engagement programme will seek to build understanding of the challenges facing the water sector. It will set out Scottish Water's long-term strategies and plans to tackle them and customers' role in addressing them. It will inform the rate of progress towards the strategic outcomes that customers and communities wish Scottish Water to achieve.

The programme will need to be given sufficient time and use a full range of engagement methods to reach a broad audience. The Customer Forum welcomes the opportunity to support Scottish Water's development of its plans for the national engagement programme.

Scottish Water commits to:

- Jointly with the Customer Forum agreeing the remit of a future active, independent customer perspective and how it will be established, in consultation with other stakeholders.

² Note that 'value' in this context is used in the broader sense of 'value to customers' rather than a strict economic appraisal of value.

- Jointly with the Customer Forum, ensure that the independent customer perspective has the capacity and capability to achieve its objectives and that it will be established to follow on immediately from the conclusion of the Customer Forum.
- Working with the Customer Forum, and the future independent customer perspective, on the development and implementation of the national engagement programme.

Agreement of the Strategic Plan

Given the assurances detailed above, the Customer Forum agrees the Strategic Plan has taken proper account of the evidence on the priorities and preferences of current and future customers and welcomes Scottish Water's commitment to seek to continue to understand, anticipate and meet customers' and communities' expectations in the delivery of the Strategic Plan.

**Approved by the Board of Members on
29 January 2020 and signed
on its behalf by:**

**Douglas Millican
Chief Executive, Scottish Water
DATE 31 January 2020**

**Approved by the Customer Forum
and signed on its behalf by:**

**Peter Peacock
Chair of the Customer Forum
DATE 31 January 2020**

ANNEX A CUSTOMER FORUM'S FORMAL RESPONSE TO SCOTTISH WATER'S STRATEGIC PLAN



Douglas Millican
Chief Executive
Scottish Water

2nd December 2019

Dear Douglas

Scottish Water's draft Strategic Plan

Thank you for sending the Customer Forum Scottish Water's draft Strategic Plan for the next 25 years. I will briefly summarise the Forum's view before setting it out in more detail.

The draft Strategic Plan is the result of extensive effort and collaboration between Scottish Water, the Customer Forum and other stakeholders over nearly three years. The Forum has greatly appreciated the candour and willingness to engage demonstrated by Scottish Water and other stakeholders during this process. No doubt there will be further edits before publication, but at this point the Forum considers that the Strategic Plan has taken proper account of the evidence that the Customer Forum has provided on the views and aspirations of current and future customers and is minded to agree the plan, subject to the Minute of Agreement currently under discussion and the points set out below.

1. The pace at which implementing the Strategic Plan is achievable will depend on many factors, and the upward pressure on costs that implies will need ongoing consideration. Being minded to agree the 25-year Strategic Plan does not imply that the Customer Forum is endorsing any specific long-term price profile.
2. Scottish Water and the Customer Forum will discuss and seek to agree prices for 2021-27, and suitable safeguards for customers, after the Water Industry Commission for Scotland publish their approach to consideration of potential price ranges in early 2020. The Forum will approach these discussions in the context of the customer research and at this stage it is not endorsing any particular approach to prices or customer safeguards for 2021-27.

The Strategic Plan will transform Scottish Water's objectives and way of working. In that sense the Strategic Review of Charges could be seen as phase 1 of Scottish Water's transformation; phase 2 will be building public understanding and ownership, while Scottish Water concurrently continues to develop better understanding of zero emissions and asset solutions; phase 3 would be to implement the conclusions at scale.

In that context the proposed National Engagement exercise is a critical step in building customers' understanding and confidence that Scottish Water is doing the right thing for them, in line with their long-term interests. I set out the evidence for this in more detail later in this letter.

The Vision

The plan is rooted in the sector vision which the Forum was pleased to be part of creating, and which the Forum has endorsed as an appropriate aspirational statement to help give direction to future priorities and actions.

The Strategic Plan

The Forum has been very appreciative of the attention given by Scottish Water to the voice of customers as represented by the Customer Forum. We believe the plan is all the stronger for the constructive and rigorous dialogue that we have had in our bi-lateral discussions in recent months. In these we have used the customer research evidence to identify and articulate many issues and have been pleased to see these reflected in the plan. These customer expectations include:

- ensuring the maintenance of service excellence and reliability in the face of twin challenges of climate change and asset replacement;
- tackling climate change by going beyond net zero emissions as one of the three strategic objectives;
- delivering and demonstrating great value in investing customers' money efficiently, with customers seeing benefit in Scottish Water developing additional revenue streams from energy and circular economy activity
- the role Scottish Water can play in securing the health of, and access to, the wider environment;
- delivering additional public benefit, including through a step-change in building active relationships with customers and their communities;
- removing lead from the public water network by 2045.

The Forum recognises there is much detail yet to work through to move toward delivering on the ambitions the Strategic Plan sets out. The envisaged Delivery Plan, the route map to zero emissions, strategic environmental assessments and the performance information and reporting framework, will all be significant milestones in moving to implementation. Ongoing engagement with customers will be important to ensure these reflect their expectations. This is particularly so given the current political, and therefore economic uncertainty and its implications for customers' needs, priorities and aspirations.

Implications for prices

The Forum notes Scottish Water's view that to achieve the plan's ambitions water charges will likely have to rise slightly above the rate of inflation for an extended period. This is linked to the Water Industry Commission for Scotland's (WICS) work with Scottish Water, as set out in the recent Decision Paper on Asset Replacement.

The Forum acknowledges this work implies upward pressure on investment and the potential for this to impact on customer charges. We also note that Scottish Water has been open about the fact its asset data will need to mature over coming years, and that a great deal of work is necessary to understand the cost of meeting the net zero carbon challenge. This suggests that the financing required, and therefore customer charges and other sources of income, will need to be kept under ongoing scrutiny and reassessment.

The Forum welcomes Scottish Water's commitment to limiting the need for charge rises through efficiency. Meeting the challenge of the climate emergency will require considerable innovation and which may well hold the potential to reduce some cost and/or develop new income streams for Scottish Water, which could also constrain the need for charge rises in the longer-term, albeit that it may add to costs in the shorter term.

As you state in your letter, Scottish Water and the Customer Forum will commence discussions on customer charge levels for the 2021-27 period once the WICS publish their approach to the prospects for prices early in 2020.

National Engagement

Research has told us that customers do not have an informed understanding of Scottish Water and want to know more about Scottish Water and their water systems, and that they want to feel reassured that they are getting value for money.

The Forum's Future Strategy research demonstrated that when customers understand the challenges facing Scottish Water (and therefore why additional funding might be needed and what it will be used for) there is greater preparedness to recognise that the challenges identified should be addressed and that holds the potential for acceptance of charge rises. In the scenarios tested in that deliberative research around¹ 10% of these **informed** customers favoured charge increases at CPI; 50% at CPI+1%; and 40% at CPI+3%. In other words, the better customers understand the challenges ahead, the more likely they are to accept that a measure of price increases may be necessary. That said, though informed customers accept that price increases may be necessary, they also have real concerns about affordability. It is clear from other research (ESRI 1) that when customers are not as well informed the majority do not support above inflation rises.

The Forum therefore welcomes the commitment in the Strategic Plan to a major engagement exercise with customers to share the Strategic Plan. It notes that public engagement is only likely to succeed when the public don't think there is already an agreed outcome, and in the spirit of ethical business practice, the intent should be to enable customers to reach an informed view about futures challenges and potential solutions.

Minute of Agreement

Our ongoing discussions on a Minute of Agreement (MOA) dealing with issues that, while important to customers, are more detailed than appropriate for the Strategic Plan, are proceeding well. The Forum

¹ As this was qualitative research these figures are not statistically robust, but instead an insight to relative strength of view.

hopes that these discussions can conclude satisfactorily, and that the MOA will be part of any final agreement with Scottish Water.

Future Customer Role

During the transformation that Scottish Water will undergo as it gears up to deliver the Strategic Plan over time it will be important that the needs, priorities and aspirations of customers and communities remain at the heart of decision making. The Forum therefore welcomes Scottish Water's commitment to "a continuing, active, independent customer perspective on the services we provide". There are key areas where a customer voice could be valuable including the national engagement, strategic challenge, scrutiny and reassessment processes, customer and community assurance on performance and progress towards strategic objectives, prioritising needs, and progressing investment needs to the committed list amongst others. We look forward to discussing this further.

Conclusion

The Strategic Plan is a significant document, and Scottish Water deserve credit both for the ambition it sets out, and for the open and constructive way in which you have developed it. It represents a further and significant step in Scottish Water's evolution from being primarily a core service delivery company to one ever more focused on the climate challenge, its customers' water and wastewater needs and on delivering wider public benefit, increasingly in tune with what people and communities aspire to.

In that context, and subject to the foregoing caveats and statements, the Customer Forum would be minded to agree a final Strategic Plan in line with this draft.

Yours sincerely



Peter Peacock

Chair, Customer Forum